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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 IRAN RPO DUBAI 000028

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SUBJECT: READOUT OF JAPANESE DFM SASAE'S TRIP TO IRAN

RPO DUBAI 00000028 001.2 OF 003

CLASSIFIED BY: Jillian Burns, Director, Iran Regional Presence
Office, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1.(S) Summary: The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iran desk officer Junichi Sumi met IRPOffs May 26 to give an informal readout of Deputy Foreign Minister for Foreign Affairs Sasae's trip to Iran May 23-26. According to Sumi who accompanied Sasae, they met with a number of senior Iranian officials. The most noteworthy comment of the readout was that Judiciary Advisor Mohammad Javad Larijani told Sasae that he wrote Iran's new proposal for comprehensive talks. According to Sumi, despite no progress on the issue of suspension of enrichment and reprocessing in the Iranian proposal, the Japanese view Iran's proposal for talks as possibly worth exploring, although with a skeptical eye. End summary

2.(S) Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iran desk office Junichi Sumi, accompanied by Consul to Dubai Kenji Saito, met with IRPOffs May 26 to give an informal readout of Deputy Foreign Minister for Foreign Affairs Sasae's trip to Iran May 23-26. Sumi noted that Sasae would be meeting with U/S Burns in Washington May 28. According to Sumi, this meeting in Iran was the 17th Japan-Iran Vice-Ministerial Regular Consultation, an initiative that began in 1991. Sumi added that a few more director general level meetings have been proposed for this year, to cover human rights and nonproliferation and disarmament.

Interlocutors

3.(S) Sumi said that Sasae and his delegation had dinner with Mohammad Javad Larijani, head of the Iranian Judiciary's human rights committee and brother of new Majles speaker Ali Larijani. The party also met Senior Advisor to the President Mojtaba Samareh Hashemi; Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Dr. Sa'id Jalili; Minister of Foreign Affairs Mottaki; and Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Special Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Acting Deputy Foreign Minister for Asian and Pacific Affairs Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini. (Comment: Sumi's only comment about Hosseini was that he was "unimpressive." End comment)

4.(S) Sumi commented that the Iranian officials seemed to have big expectations from the Japanese, particularly in terms of

support for Iran's position on the nuclear issue, but the Japanese official said they had not delivered anything new to Iran. Sumi, who speaks Farsi, was previously posted to Tehran and has been working on Iran issues since 2001.

Javad Larijani

5.(S) Sumi said unlike the other Iranian officials who stuck to familiar themes, Judiciary advisor Mohammad Javad Larijani gave clear explanations of Iranian views. Sumi added that given how freely Larijani spoke with them, he assumed that Larijani must have close ties to the Supreme Leader. (Note: Sumi said that Javad Larijani also correctly predicted that his brother Ali would become Majles speaker a few days in advance. Endnote)

6.(S) Sumi said that when Larijani traveled to Japan in February - reportedly on his own initiative - he discussed the nuclear issue and promised the Japanese a non-paper on Iran's views. However, after the next IAEA report came out that was less positive on Iran, the Japanese government never received the non-paper. Instead, Iran issued a proposal for talks, called the Proposed Package for Constructive Negotiations. Sumi thought it was possible that the promised non-paper had turned into the proposal document.

7.(S) Sumi said that Mohammad Javad Larijani told the Japanese that he was the author of Iran's proposal, which Larijani reportedly called a "grand bargain." (Note: Sumi said the only other Iranian official who used the term "grand bargain" was Iranian Ambassador to Japan Seyed Abbas Araghchi, who then asked that he not be quoted to Tehran. Endnote) Larijani reportedly told Sasae in plain terms that Iran now feels confident with high oil prices and is ready to play a role in the region and to

RPO DUBAI 00000028 002.2 OF 003

cooperate on Afghanistan and Iraq. (Note: Sumi said that Ambassador Araghchi had also said that Iran's proposal demonstrated Iran's confidence. Endnote) Larijani maintained that Iran had played a positive role in resolving the Lebanese conflict, contributing to the Doha conference.

8.(S) Larijani, who clearly regarded the proposal as a serious offer, claimed it was the first time that Iran announced willingness talk about all issues of concerns to all countries, including the Middle East peace process and Hizballah. He indicated that although the wording was somewhat vague, more sensitive issues could be raised in the talks. For instance, when asked by the Japanese about Israel, Larijani reportedly did not outright reject the possibility of discussing Israel in talks. He did not respond, however, when Sasae asked if suspension could be part of discussions.

Samareh-Hashemi

9.(S) Senior Presidential advisor Mojtaba Samareh Hashemi surprised the Japanese by extending his meeting with them to close to three hours. Sumi noted that Hashemi was "alone;" he did not have any of "his" people with him, only a few Ministry of Foreign Affairs employees. Sumi was also surprised by Hashemi's character. He was expecting a hardliner along the lines as President Ahmadinejad, but instead said that Hashemi came across as "normal," and when he spoke to the group in English, he came off as "human" and approachable, someone with whom you could do business.

Jalili

10.(S) Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Sa'id Jalili reportedly spent most of the meeting discussing Iran's new proposal but, according to Sumi, said little that was new.

Sumi noted, without going into detail, that Jalili had "interesting" views about other issues, such as North Korea. Jalili also asked about Japan's relationships with China and Russia. Sumi noted that Jalili had a limp which he surmised may have been an injury from the Iran-Iraq war. Sumi described Jalili's secretary as a real "Basij" who would not shake their hands.

11.(S) Sumi said that when Araghchi left his position as deputy foreign minister to become ambassador to Japan, they assumed the position was a demotion, but instead he was surprised to find that Jalili and Araghchi have a good relationship and appear to talk regularly. When the MFA had asked Araghchi, in advance of the trip, for a copy of the Iranian proposal, Araghchi delivered, via a phone call to Jalili.

Mottaki

12.(S) The meeting with FM Mottaki also lasted much longer than expected, even though Mottaki was on his way to Syria. According to Sumi, he got the impression from FM Mottaki that he was irritated with the Japanese. Sumi claimed that Mottaki is a strong advocate within the Iranian government for relations with Japan and surmised that perhaps Mottaki felt his faith in the Japanese had not borne fruit. Iran reportedly took it as a "bad signal" when Japan implemented UNSC 1803. Mottaki told the Japanese that they can do more both politically and economically in the Middle East. Sasae explained what Japan was doing in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. When asked why the Japanese FM had not made a visit to Iran, Sasae responded that he would go when the environment was right.

Japan's take on Iran's proposal

13.(S) According to Sumi, Sasae indicated that Iran's proposal may be nothing more than an attempt to talk for the sake of talking, but on the other hand, it would be a shame to ignore it. The international community could explore talking to Iran, while remaining skeptical of Iran's intent. Sumi did not know whether it was true that Javad Larijani was the author of the proposal, but his own assessment of the writing of it indicated

RPO DUBAI 00000028 003.2 OF 003

that it was written by one person and by someone powerful enough not to be edited by others. He felt it was very different from Iran's August 2006 response to the P5+1 package which he found very confusing. Sumi added that Ambassador Araghchi told them separately that perhaps some of the elements of the new P5+1 package could be accommodated in the proposed talks. Sumi also said that Araghchi reportedly says bluntly to the Japanese that the Iranians have to talk to the US.

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